

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02 L-01

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R 061320Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6556

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 2722

LIMDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IS, US

SUBJECT: EBAN CALLS FOR EARLY ELECTION AS PREREQUISITE TO ISRELI
INITIATIVE ON OVERALL SETTLEMENT

SUMMARY: FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER ABBA EBAN HAS ISSUED CALL FOR
EARLY ELECTION TO GIVE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT MANDATE FOR NEGOTIATING
OVERALL PEACE SETTLEMENT, CHARGING THAT CURRENT GOVERNMENT
LACKS REQUISITE PARLIAMENTARY BASIS FOR THIS PURPOSE. MOREOVER,
ACCORDING TO BRITISH MAGAZINE, EBAN WHILE IN LONDON LAST WEEK
INDICATED HIS READINESS TO PRESENT HIMSELF AS ALTERNATIVE TO
RABIN IF ELECTION WER TO BE HELD. WIDE SPECTRUM OF POLTICIANS--
INCLUDING DOVISH ELEMENTS OF LABOR PARTY, AS WELL AS JUNIOR
COLATION PARTNERS MAPAM AND INDEPENDENT LIBERALS, AND MARGINAL
FAR LEFT GROUPS--ALSO BELEIVE, THAT GOI SHOULD DECIDE NOW ON
OVERALL PEACE PROGRAM. NON OF THESE GROUPS, HOWEVER, AT PRESENT
HAVE NECESSARY POLITICAL CLOUT TO COMPLE GOI TO MOVE IN THIS
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DIRECTION.

AS FAR AS WE CAN SEE, GOI HAS NO INTENTION TO MOVE TO EARLY
ELECTION, NOR DOES IT VIEW ITSELF AT THIS TIME AS UNDER ANY
SIGNIFICANT PRESSUR TO DO SO. END SUMMARY.

1. FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER ABBA EBAN, SPEAKING AT ENGINEER'S CLUB IN TEL AVVI MAY 2, REPORTEDLY SAID THAT IF GENEVA CONFERENCE IS RCONVENED, IT WILL BE NECESSARY FOR ELECTION TO BE HELD IN ISRAEL IN ORDER TO CREATE NEW PARLIAMENTARY BASIS FOR FORMUALTIN OVERALL GOI PEACE PROGRAM. EBAN MADE IT CLEAR THAT, IN HIS VIEW, CONSITUION OF PRESENT GOVERNEMTN MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON CONTENT OF OVERALL PEACE PROGRAM NOR DOES THER EXIST MAJORIY FOR SUCH PROGRAM IN KNESSET. ACCORDING TO BRITISH PERIODICAL (SEE BELOW), EBAN BELIEVES GOVERNMENT NOW MUST MAKE MAJOR DECISIONS ABOUT FIAN FRONTIERS AND ABOUT WHCIH AREAS ARE NEGOTIABLE.

2. AS TO POSSIBLIITY OF RESUMING BILATERAL GOI/GOE NEGOTIATIONS UNDER U.S. AUSPICES, EBAN TOLD TEL AVIV AUDIENCE THAT GOVERNEMTN, IF IT BELEIVES OPPORTUNTIY STILL EXISTS FOR REACHING INTERIM AGREEMENT, MUST FORMULATE NEW IDEAS NOW, WITHOUT GIVING UP PRINCIPLE OF EGYPTIAN POLITICAL QUID-PRO-QUO FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWASL BREAKDOWN OF TALKS, HE SAID, PROVES THAT MEANINGFUL ELEMENTS OF PEACE CANNOT BE ACHIEVED IN FRAMEWORK OF A SMALL WITHDRAWL.

3. ISRAELI PRESS ALSO HAS HIGHLIGHTED REMARKS ATTRIBUTD TO " SOURCES CLOSE TO EBAN" ACCORDING TO WHICH, WHILE IN LONDON LAST WEEK, HE EXPRESSED READINESS TO PRESENT HIMSELF AS ALTERNATIVE TO RABIN IN NEW ELECTION. (ITEM ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN LONDON JEWISH CHRONICLE). EBAN REPORTEDLY INDICATED THAT FORMULATION OF OVER-ALL ISRAELI PEACE PROGRAM HAD TO BE LINKED WITH LEADERSHIP RESHUFFLE, FIRST IN LABOR PARTY AND THEREAFTER IN ELECTION. BOTH MAARIV AND JERUSALEM POST MAY 5 HAVE COMMENTED CRITICALLY ABOUT EBAN'S LONDON-BASED INITIATIVES, NOTING INAPPROPRIATENESS OF ISRAELI POLITICIANS CRITICIZING GOI LEADERSHIP AND POLICY WHILE ABROAD. PRESS NOTED THAT OPPOSITION LEADER BEGIN, WELLKNOWN AS SEVERE CRITIC OF GOI POLICIES, HAD CRAEFULLY ESCHEWED ATTACKING GOI DURING HIS LATEST U.S. VISIT.

4. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT, BESIDES EBAN, WIDE SPECTRUM OF ISRAELI POLITICIANS HAS BEEN URGING GOI TO COME UP WITH OVERALL CONFIDENTIAL

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PEACE PROGRAM. THIS WAS THEME OF ILP MINISTERS KOL AND HAUSNER, SUPPORTED BY MAPAM MINISTERS SHEMTOV AND ROSEN, IN APRIL 27 CABINET MEETING. IN ADDITON, " DOVISH" MINORITY WITHIN LABOR PARTY ALSO IS CONVINCED OF URGENCY OF DEVELOPING ISRAELI INITIATIVE FOR OVERALL SETTLEMENT, AS ARE TINY LEFTWING ELEMENTS SUCH AS CITIZENS RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND LYOVA ELIAV (WHO PLAN TO FORM UNITED PARTY: SEE SEPTTEL), MOKED AND AMNON RUBINSTEIN'S SHINUI MOVEMENT. SEVERAL COMMENTATORS, REPRESENTING SAME SECTOR OF ISRAELI OPINION AS ABOVE GROUPS, HAVE WRITTEN ARTICLES RECENTLY URGIN NEW ELECTION AS BASIS FOR FORMULATING OVERALL PEACE INITIATIVE.

5. IN OUR JUDGEMET, POWER OF THESE INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPINGS AT PRESENT TO FORCE EITHER A) EARLY GOI DECISION ON OVERALL PEACE

INITIATIVE AND/OR B) NEW ELECTION IS VERY LIMITED. DOMINANT VIEW IN RULING COALITION (AS WELL AS IN PUBLIC OPINION) IS THAT GOI POLICY IN SUSPENDED NEGOTIATIONS WAS NOT ONLY CORRECT BUT SHOWED GREAT FLEXIBILITY, AND THAT NEW STEPS SHOULD BE MADE ONLY ON RECIPROCAL BASIS WITH NEW CONCESSIONS FROM EGYPT. THUS, WE DO NOT FORESEE AT THIS JUNCTURE THAT GOI WILL TAKE SUCH A DRAMATIC STEP AS CALLING OF ELECTION OR HOLDING OF DEBATE ON FINAL SETTLEMENT. GOI STILL SEEMS TO BE FOCUSING ON POSSIBILITY OF REVIVED EGYPTIAN ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS UNDER US AUSPICES (PERHAPS AFTER SYMBOLIC RECONVENING OF GENEVA CONFERENCE) FOR INTERIM AGREEMENT.

6. EBAN'S REPORTED ASPIRATION TO CHALLENGE RABIN FOR PRIME MINISTERSHIP STIKES US AS RATHER UNREALISTIC. AT PRESENT WE CAN SENSE NO GROUNDSWELL OF OPPOSITION TO RABIN WITHIN LABOR PARTY AND, IF SOMETHING LIKE THIS WERE TO DEVELOP, WE DOBUT THAT PARTY WOULD TURN TO EBAN. FOR EARS THERE HAS BEEN IMPORTANT CONTRAST BETWEEN EBAN'S REPUTATION ABROAD AND HIS STANDING WITHIN LABOR PARTY. WHATEVER MERITS OF HIS CURRENT POSITION, MANY LABOR PARTY MEMBERS WILL SEE INTO IT AS OPPORTUNISTIC POLICTICAL MVE, AND WILL RECALL THAT GOI DID NOT FORMULATE OVERALL INITIATIVE THROUGHOUT YEARS WHEN HE SERVED AS FOREIGN MINISTER.

VELIOTES

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